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Revitalization of the Environment Council of Alberta (ECA)

Findings of the Coopers & Lybrand Consulting Group

A Precis

Prepared by the Environment Council of Alberta

December 1990

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INTRODUCTION

This study is part of an overall commitment to revitalize the Environment Council of Alberta (ECA). From May 15 to August 15, 1990, the Coopers and Lybrand Consulting Group conducted a study to develop a strategic plan and organizational response for the ECA. The final report was received on August 27, 1990. I consolidated the findings from their reports (interim and final) with those from the two surveys and from my own interviews with staff, members of the Public Advisory Committees (PACs) to the ECA and stakeholders who contacted me. (For readers not familiar with the surveys, of the Advisory Committee members and of the active nominating organizations, the results are available from the ECA in the report: The Environment Council of Alberta and its Advisory Committees. Responses to Questionnaires sent to Advisory Committee Members and Their Constituent Organizations.)

At the consultant's suggestion, I formed an Advisory Committee to the Revitalization, to discuss and review the results. That Committee was chaired by me and consisted of Hon. Elaine McCoy, Minister of Labour; Mr. Sherrold Moore, Senior Vice-President of AMOCO; Mr. Vance MacNichol, Deputy Minister of Alberta Environment; and Dr. Joan Snyder, Chair of the PAC Co-ordinating Committee. The consultant also attended these meetings until mid-August.

Recommendations on the revitalization were presented to the Hon. Ralph Klein (Minister through which the ECA reports to Government) on September 27, 1990. Mr. Klein is taking the recommended direction to Cabinet for consideration.

Upon receipt of that direction, I plan to call a Joint Meeting of the Public Advisory Committees.

In the interim, I committed to making a precis of the consultant's findings available - which is the substance of this report. For the reader who is not familiar with the background of the Council, one is provided in the front section. The consultant's findings are in plain text, with the rest in italics, to distinguish them from any remarks I have made to provide context or background information.

Please keep in mind that the findings of this Report do not necessarily coincide with the direction for the Council recommended to the Minister.

Dr. Natalia M. Krawetz
Chief Executive Officer
Environment Council of Alberta

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL OF ALBERTA (ECA)

Legislation

The ECA is an agency of the Province of Alberta. The Environment Council Act specifies that the Council deals with matters related to environment conservation and then states the activities/functions which the Council must perform, the key of which are:

1. *Hold hearings at the request of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. (The last hearings were in 1986, on recycling.)*
2. *Respond to Ministerial inquiries.*
3. *Hold Stop Order Appeals (see 4(1)(b) of the Act). (Only one appeal has been held in the history of the Council.)*
4. *Co-ordinate environmental matters through the medium of the Department of the Environment.*
5. *Conduct an ongoing review of the policies and practices of the provincial government with respect to environment conservation.*

The Council reports to Government through the Minister of the Environment.

History: The Conservation Authority

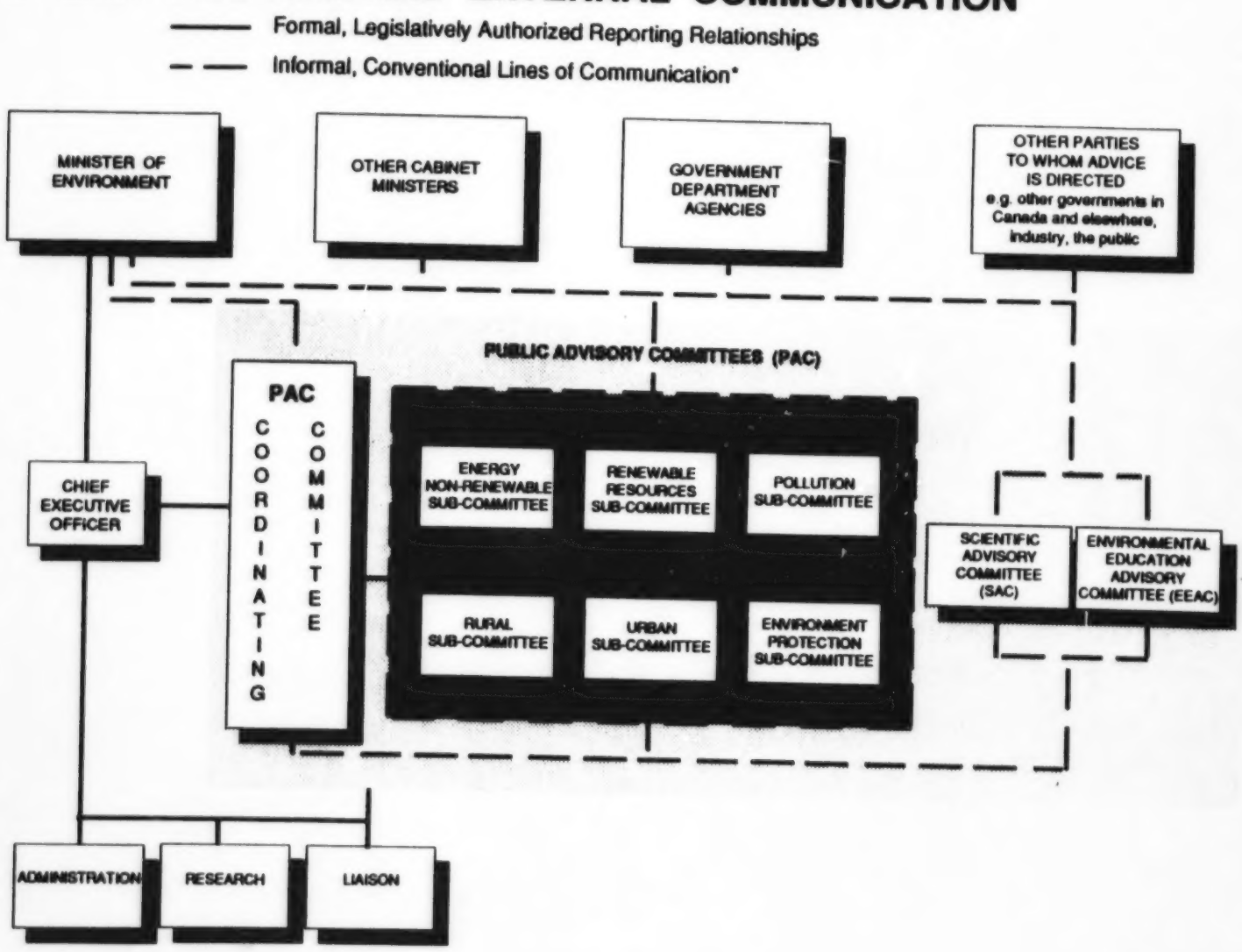
The organization's roots began in 1970 as the Environment Conservation Authority. It was changed under new legislation (from the Environment Conservation Authority Act to The Environment Council Act) in 1977.

History: The Council from 1977 to 1990

There have been two Chief Executive Officers. The first, Mr. Alistair Crerar, served from 1977 to 1988. In 1988, Mr. Crerar resigned and his position was vacant for almost two years, during which the three senior managers administered the Council in the absence of a formally appointed CEO.

The day-to-day functions of the organization were delegated to the three managers of Administration, Research and Liaison (shown in the Figure 1). Administration includes personnel, finance, receptionist, messenger, the library and editing functions and responsibility for the physical facilities. The Research Division focuses primarily on document preparation and is noted for its work as a hearings' secretariat. Of its six professional staff, four are biologists; one, a resource economist, is on secondment to the Secretariat of the National Round Table on Environment and Economy; and the other is a geographer. Liaison Division's key function is the support services for the Public Advisory Committees (PACs). There are approximately 200 volunteers (representing 101 active organizations and 22 unaffiliated members) on its PACs.

Figure 1. ECA INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION



* SOURCE: Interviews with PAC members and *Roles Document.* Public Advisory Committees to the Environment Council of Alberta (1987)

Public Advisory Committees (PACs) are as follows:

(a) Public Environmental Advisory Committee (PEAC)

- *Energy and Non-Renewable Resources Sub-Committee*
- *Environment Protection Sub-Committee*
- *Pollution Sub-Committee*
- *Renewable Resources Sub-Committee*
- *Rural Environment Sub-Committee*
- *Urban Environment Sub-Committee*

(b) Science Advisory Committee (SAC),

(c) Environmental Education Advisory Committee (EEAC).

Liaison has two professionals.

The Council has been a relatively stable organization, downsizing from a staff of 27 to 20 through attrition over four years (1984 to 1987), and having extremely low turnover. Half of the staff have never worked for another Alberta provincial organization and most have been with the Council for more than 7 years.

During the absence of a CEO (and in the absence of specific work assignments) some of Research Division's personnel were allocated to work on the Conservation Strategy (a PAC initiative, described below).

The last organizational review was on the Environment Conservation Authority (in 1977). The Council has never had an organizational review. The only other review has been associated with the development and revision of a roles document for the Public Advisory Committees (last revised in 1987).

Role of Public Advisory Committees (PACs)

As previously described, the PACs are the volunteer arm of the Council. The roles of the various Committees were established by the members themselves and are given in a roles document. Because of differences of opinion between various subcommittees over which had jurisdiction over an environmental issue, a PAC Co-ordinating Committee was struck, consisting of the

Chairs of the above committees and sub-committees. The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected by the entire PAC membership. The Chair of the Co-ordinating Committee is "the first among equals", and thus reflects the consensus of the Committee. The Chair does not direct the PACs or the Sub-Committees.

While Liaison Division acts as support to the Committees, the Committees function independently of the Council (i.e., their expenses are paid by the Council, they receive staff support from the Council, but their views are their own and they are not accountable to the Council). However, the Council is responsible and held accountable for them.

Current Situation

The new CEO assumed her role on January 15, 1990. She has maintained the prior organization, with some minor changes.

The 1990-91 budget is $1.2 million; all except $300,000 is allocated to permanent labour costs.

There are six major tasks for the Council this fiscal year:

- *a strategic plan/organizational review (CEO's highest priority),*
- *participation as Secretariat to the Round Table on Environment and Economy (at the Minister's request),*
- *furthering the Alberta Conservation Strategy in the policy process; completion of all related ongoing activities,*
- *input into the public review of the proposed Comprehensive Environment Protection Act,*
- *an audit of the environmental practices of the Council (ongoing),*
- *completion of a paper on global warming (started last year)*

WHAT THE CONSULTANT DID

The consultant (The Coopers and Lybrand Consulting Group) used the following information on which to base the findings:

1. Seventy-eight personal and telephone interviews with key stakeholder groups, including

   - staff members of the ECA,
   - internal stakeholders, that is, members of the Advisory Committees - each sub-committee of the Public Environmental Advisory Committee, the Co-ordinating Committee of the Public Advisory Committees, the Environmental Advisory Committee and the Science Advisory Committee,
   - external stakeholders, that is, the provincial government (at the ministerial and deputy ministerial level), federal government, municipal government, environment groups, special interest groups, industry groups, labour and scientific/academic representatives.

   A more complete list of those interviewed is in Transitions #2 (a newsletter available from the ECA).

2. A review and analysis of reports, position papers and other documentation.

3. Draft results of the surveys conducted by the ECA, The Environment Council of Alberta and its Advisory Committees. Responses to Questionnaires sent to Advisory Committee Members and Their Constituent Organizations.

4. The expertise and experience of its team.

WHAT THE CONSULTANT FOUND

External Factors Which Impact on the ECA

The consultant examined the ECA in the context of external factors which influence its role and effectiveness. They are listed below:

1. Environmental issues are on the top of the agenda for many Albertans.

2. The public requires and expects more input into government decision making, but its views are not always well founded. *(Thus the need for information and education, as well as consultation.)*

3. The provincial environmental scene:

   - The environmental jurisdiction is spread over many departments and agencies including but not necessarily restricted to:

     Environment
     Alberta Special Waste Management Corporation
     Agriculture
     Economic Development and Trade
     Energy
     Energy Resources Conservation Board
     Forestry, Lands and Wildlife
     Health
     Labour
     Municipal Affairs
     Recreation and Parks
     Tourism
     Transportation and Utilities

   - Upcoming agencies with a mandate related to environment:

     Natural Resources Conservation Board

   - Co-ordinating committees of government related to environment:

     Natural Resources Co-ordinating Council
     Natural Resources Advisory Committee

Resource Integration Committee

- Advisory bodies to government related to environment:

  Round Table on Environment and Economy
  Water Resources Commission
  Many government departments work directly with the public through boards and committees (e.g., Ecological Reserves Advisory Committees, Public Advisory Committee and Appeal Board (Health), Ad hoc Project Development Committees (Tourism)

- Environmental matters are addressed through the Cabinet Committee on Economic Planning.

- There is also an Environment Caucus Committee.

4. There are some 200 environmental groups active in Alberta, many with project or issue specific interests. *The Alberta Environmental Network is a vehicle for them to share information.*

Areas of Strength and Weakness in the ECA

External Matters

1. The image of the ECA is, in general, inconsistent *(i.e., three images - of the CEO's activities, those associated with a hearings secretariat, and those of the Public Advisory Committees)* and/or unknown.

   Lack of awareness is a major impediment to the ECA's effectiveness (i.e., other organizations cannot use its services if they do not know about it). There is little knowledge of the ECA beyond its existence, with external stakeholders outside the environmental areas. There is little substantive knowledge of the ECA among the groups represented on its Public Advisory Committees. There is little general public awareness. In short, the ECA has low visibility and needs to create awareness of and knowledge about itself.

   Amongst the members of its Public Advisory Committees, there is a lack of knowledge of the relationship between the ECA and the Committees. Most (of those interviewed) see themselves as being distinct from the ECA and some see

the relationship purely in the light of the ECA providing them with support. There is a varied perception of what roles the ECA is actually filling.

2. Achievements of the ECA

a) Materials Produced

The ECA has been very active in addressing some important environmental issues. And it has produced many materials related to public hearings and research reports.

The following recent public hearings were conducted by the ECA:

- 1986 - Recycling of Waste in Alberta
- 1983 - Maintaining and Expanding the Agricultural Land Base in Alberta
- 1981 - Noise in Alberta
- 1980 - Hazardous Waste Management in Alberta
- 1979 - Water Management Within the Oldman River Basin
- 1978 - The Environmental Effects of Forestry Operations in Alberta

Information has largely been produced related to various hearings or in response to Ministerial requests. The ability to produce such information was the most frequently mentioned strength of the ECA. In general materials are considered high in quality and helpful.

It is difficult to gauge the exact effects of these hearings and reports since no formal response has been made. The fact that its advice is not always acted on immediately may relate more to its leading edge nature and thus a lack of understanding and comfort with the implications of pursuing recommendations, than to performance of ECA per se.

Implementation by line departments has been uneven. However, the ECA has also been criticized for its lack of follow-up.

b) Information Clearinghouse

The ECA has a library (open to the public), an on-line information exchange (serving the Edmonton area) and responds to some 1500 public inquiries each year (coming in by phone or letter). The ECA was praised by those interviewed for disseminating informative materials for public instruction and use. It was criticized that its materials are not widely distributed and thus the readership extends only to committed people.

c) Public Hearings/Consultation

On the whole this is a role which the ECA is perceived as having fulfilled successfully. There was some criticism of the composition of panels and of its hearings process. *See also comments under a) above.*

d) Awareness Creation and Advocacy

The ECA/PAC is seen as effective in raising the profile of environmental issues on a project-specific basis. However this is seen to cross over into advocacy and was a very contentious issue amongst those interviewed. Advocacy is viewed favourably by Advisory Committee members but not by many external stakeholders interviewed.

3. Overall Effectiveness and Impact of the ECA

Overall Effectiveness: Those interviewed were asked to rate the current effectiveness of the ECA on 22 different roles. *(These roles were based on the legislation and on a list of expectations of the ECA generated from interviews the CEO had with staff, PAC members and external stakeholders.)* The rating sheet is shown in Table 1. Results are shown in Figure 2. In short, ECA staff had the most favourable perceptions, while external stakeholder's ratings were consistently on the ineffective side of the scale.

The ECA is seen as having done little which has directly affected government policy and for which it is recognized. By both its internal and external stakeholders, it is seen as being ineffective, having no clout and no audience.

Table 1. Rating Sheet on Effectiveness of Roles (also used to rate future viability of roles)

ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL OF ALBERTA

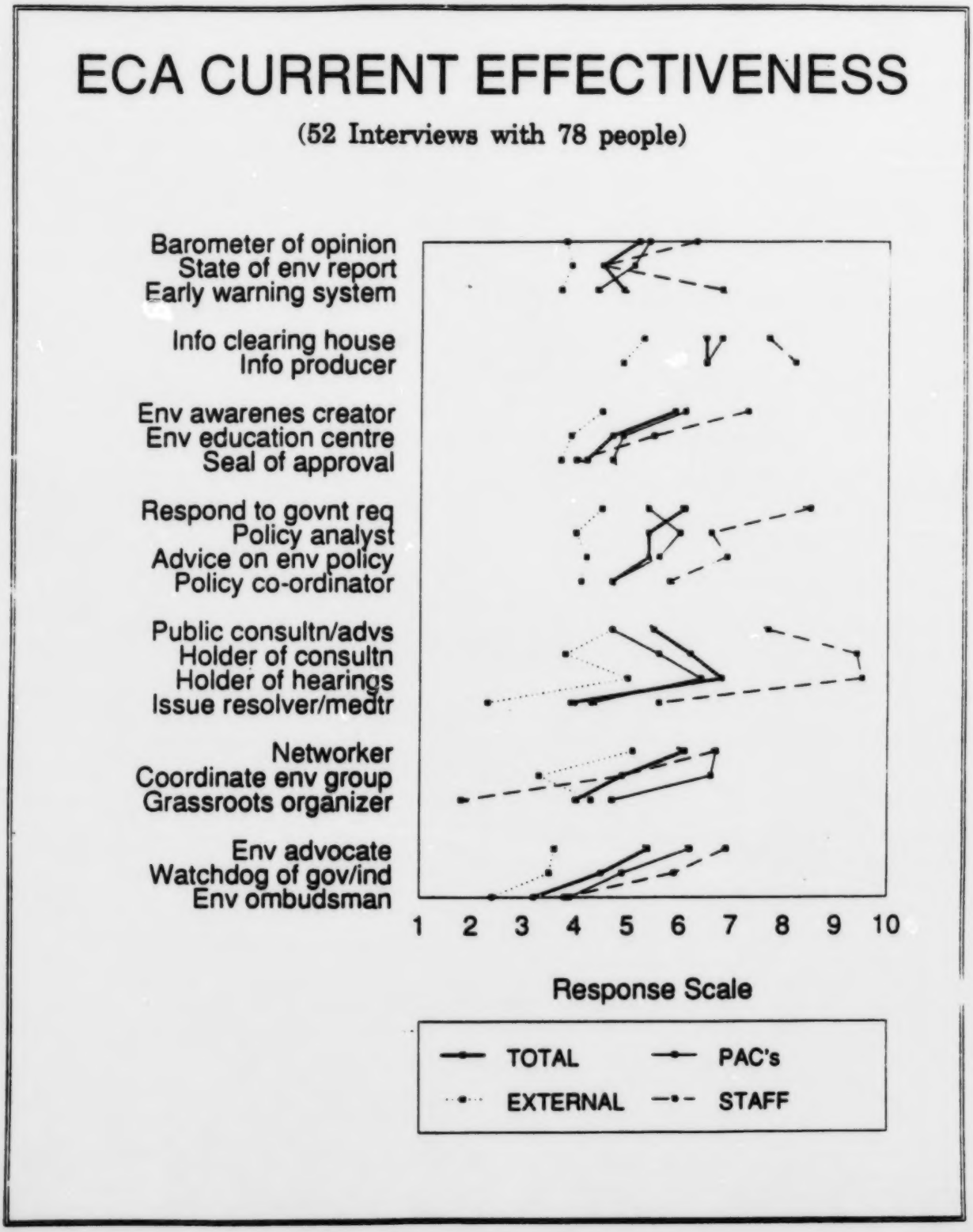
CURRENT ROLES

Please consider these roles as involving or being targeted to any one or more of the following groups:

- Government
- Industry
- Environment Groups
- Labour
- The Public

ROLES	CURRENT EFFECTIVENESS (Mark line) Not At All Effective ... Totally Effective	N/A-No Role	Don't Know
Barometer of public opinion		☐	☐
State of environment reporter		☐	☐
Early warning system		☐	☐
Information clearing house		☐	☐
Information producer (of facts/independent data)		☐	☐
Environmental awareness creator		☐	☐
Environment education agency		☐	☐
"Seal of approval" for environmental education materials		☐	☐
Respondent to Government requests		☐	☐
Networker		☐	☐
Grassroots organizer		☐	☐
Policy analyst		☐	☐
Advisor on environment policy		☐	☐
Policy co-ordinator		☐	☐
Public consultation advisor		☐	☐
Holder of public consultation		☐	☐
Holder of hearings / secretariat		☐	☐
Issue resolver/Mediator of disputes		☐	☐
Coordinator for environment groups		☐	☐
Environment advocate		☐	☐
Environmental Ombudsman		☐	☐
Watchdog of government / industry		☐	☐
Other (specify)		☐	☐

Figure 2. Results of Current Effectiveness Ratings of ECA



4. Credibility

Staff see the ECA operating at arm's length and thus providing an independent view. They assume this would result in credibility and thus they are confused about why the ECA is ineffective.

The Public Advisory Committee members interviewed feel that the extensive cross-sectoral representation on the various Advisory Committees ensures a sound, objective and balanced point of view. Thus they believe the ECA is credible. However there is a lack of trust among government and industry representatives on the Advisory Committees.

External stakeholders see the ECA largely as consisting of its Public Advisory Committees and thus as a public lobby group, taking a strong preservation and low economic growth philosophical position and not providing unbiased counsel. They do not feel that the information on which ECA/PAC recommendations are based is always correct, complete or properly researched.

To environmental groups the ECA/PAC may be credible but some feel that by virtue of its government funding it will always be attached to government and thus biased. Environmental groups have had more success in dealing with government directly (than through the ECA).

Amongst the general public of Alberta, the ECA is largely unknown, so credibility cannot be gauged.

Nationally the ECA is seen as a strong and credible influence amongst other Environment Councils in the country because of the work of the previous CEO.

5. Potential

Despite its perceived lack of effectiveness and credibility, most of those interviewed believe in the potential of ECA and are willing to see a restructured, better managed and more directed organization. There is considerable support for a look at the role of the ECA. It is widely criticized for its lack of vision, mission, focus and purpose. It is seen as having taken on too many roles and as being out of control.

Internal Matters

6. Leadership and Goals

The appointment of a new CEO is seen by most as a positive sign. The ECA needs a vision, mission, focus and purpose.

7. Human and Fiscal Resources

Resources are limited. The majority of the budget is allocated to personnel.

There are insufficient professional resources on staff (only 9 of 19 staff are professional). Staff have been praised for their success in collecting and assessing information for the Advisory Committees. The Committee members interviewed consider the staff to be well qualified, dedicated, helpful and talented. However, there is a need for higher levels of expertise on staff and for the ability to mitigate bias. At present the research staff are largely biologists and more diverse professional expertise is required.

Public Advisory Committees

8. Composition

There is a difference in perception between the members of the Public Advisory Committees and external stakeholders about the Committee's composition.

The members feel that the existence of Advisory Committees brings people together with common interests from many types of organizations across the province. They see themselves as a tremendous source of expertise, as many members are highly qualified, intelligent, seasoned and capable. Participants feel their own interest, knowledge and commitment to environmental matters is enhanced by serving on a Committee. Their meetings are viewed as an open forum for people with an interest in environmental matters. They see themselves as providing a good measure of the public pulse.

External stakeholders view the Advisory Committees as grassroots organizations or environmental groups. Many feel that the environmental groups have taken over the

Public Advisory Committees to further their own causes. They see the Committees as largely self-serving, providing an interesting and informative way for some people to socialize and discuss environmental issues for their own personal benefit. They do not believe that the Advisory Committees have well-balanced representation. Rather they see a bias toward environmental activism and under-representation of senior, labour, medical and legal interests. Thus they do not believe the Committees are a barometer of public opinion.

Other Topics Mentioned by Those Interviewed

The consultant provided a list of issue areas requiring resolution, that were mentioned by those interviewed. There was no indication of how many people raised them.

The issue areas are:

Roles

- The roles and foci of the Committees

Relationships and Accountability

- the relationship between and among the sub-committees, the three Advisory Committees and the ECA (concerns about current isolation and at times duplication of effort and/or contradiction of advice)
- linkages and relationship to the Government
- linkages and relationship to the nominating organizations (concerns with lack of two-way communication) with either the ECA or its Advisory Committees
- Committees and Sub-Committees accountability for actions they take *(current system is that they are accountable to themselves, except in terms of reimbursements of members' expenses which are processed under government expenditure regulations and guidelines)*

Composition and Selection

- the selection process of members
- the skills of the members and of Chairs
- the advisability of mixed representation (i.e., members affiliated with organizations and assumed to speak for them and members who are unaffiliated and speak for themselves)
- the number of committees and their size
- tenure of appointments (i.e., that some members appear to have life-time appointments)
- the commitment of some members as reflected in lack of attendance at meetings and/or not taking on or carrying out tasks on behalf of their Committee

Structure and Operations

- Committee and Sub-Committee size relative to the tasks
- Committee and Sub-Committee decision process relative to the tasks
- co-ordination of advice directed to external agencies (concerns about lack of co-ordination and hence the potential for inconsistency)
- potential conflict of interest in transmitting letters of advice. (Since letters go out over signature of the Committee Chair, she/he may be confronted with conflict in the face of personal or organizational disagreement with the recommendations of the letter.)

OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (BARRIERS) FOR THE ECA

Respondents were asked to indicate which of 22 possible roles should be adopted by the ECA in the future - definitely, possibly or not at all. The rating sheet is shown in Table 1. The results are shown in Table 2.

The consultant then examined each possible role in terms of the opportunities and barriers that could affect the ECA's ability to carry it out. Results are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 2

Respondent's Choices of Viable Future Roles for the ECA (in descending order - from most to least viable)

Roles stated as definitely viable for the ECA by half or more respondents	Definite	Possible	No
1. Advisor on environmental policy, to government	41	14	2
- stakeholders	17	6	0
- PAC	15	4	0
- staff	9	4	2
2. Holder of hearings/secretariat, for government	38	13	6
- stakeholders	11	7	5
- PAC	16	3	0
- staff	11	3	1
3. Responding to government requests	37	16	4
- stakeholders	15	6	2
- PAC	14	5	0
- staff	8	5	2
4. Barometer of public opinion	36	16	5
- stakeholders	15	7	1
- PAC	15	3	1
- staff	6	6	3
5. Information producer	34	19	4
- stakeholders	12	9	2
- PAC	13	4	2
- staff	9	6	0
6. Policy analyst	34	12	11
- stakeholders	14	6	3
- PAC	13	2	4
- staff	7	4	4
7. Holder of public consultation	29	23	5
- stakeholders	13	10	0
- PAC	10	6	3
- staff	6	7	2
8. Environment awareness creator	29	21	7
- stakeholders	10	9	4
- PAC	13	4	2
- staff	6	8	1

Table 2 (cont'd)

Roles which half or more respondents stated were either definite or possible viable choices	Definite	Possible	No
9. Public consultation advisor	25	23	9
- stakeholders	14	6	3
- PAC	10	6	3
- staff	1	11	3
10. Information clearinghouse	24	27	6
- stakeholders	13	10	0
- PAC	8	8	3
- staff	3	9	3
11. Environmental advocate	24	20	13
- stakeholders	9	8	6
- PAC	13	2	4
- staff	2	10	3
12. Networker	24	19	14
- stakeholders	14	6	3
- PAC	10	6	3
- staff	0	7	8
13. State of environment reporter	21	29	7
- stakeholders	10	10	3
- PAC	7	9	3
- staff	4	10	1
14. Early warning system	21	27	9
- stakeholders	7	10	6
- PAC	7	10	2
- staff	7	7	1
15. Watchdog of government and industry	18	20	19
- stakeholders	4	9	10
- PAC	10	3	6
- staff	4	8	3
16. Environment education centre	16	22	19
- stakeholders	6	8	9
- PAC	6	6	7
- staff	4	8	3

Table 2 (cont'd)

	Definite	Possible	No
17. Policy co-ordinator	13	24	20
- stakeholders	6	7	10
- PAC	6	8	5
- staff	1	9	5
18. Seal of approval of environmental education materials	8	27	22
- stakeholders	3	14	6
- PAC	3	6	10
- staff	2	7	6
Roles which half or more respondents stated were not viable for ECA			
19. Issue resolver/mediator of disputes	10	17	30
- stakeholders	3	4	16
- PAC	2	7	10
- staff	5	6	4
20. Co-ordinator of environmental groups	8	15	34
- stakeholders	3	5	15
- PAC	5	2	12
- staff	0	8	7
21. Environmental ombudsman	7	22	28
- stakeholders	4	7	12
- PAC	3	6	10
- staff	0	9	6
22. Grassroots organizer	6	13	38
- stakeholders	3	4	16
- PAC	3	5	11
- staff	0	4	11

TABLE 3

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATED TO EACH ROLE WHICH SUGGESTS POTENTIAL FUTURE VIABILITY

ROLE

1. Advisor on environmental policy

   - more support among stakeholders for this role than any other examined, from the perspective of the ECA being a leading advisor (rather than an advisor to other advisory groups)
   - opportunity to pursue policy/strategic research/advisory role
   - requires active co-operation of government
   - could conflict with other advisors (e.g., Round Table on Environment and Economy)
   - *not specifically provided for under current legislation*

2. Holder of hearings/secretariat

   - requires active co-operation of government *as can only be held by Cabinet request*
   - project-specific hearings precluded by Energy Resources Conservation Board and Natural Resources Conservation Board

3. Responding to government requests

   - requires active co-operation of government

4. Barometer of public opinion

   - requires higher public profile and improved distribution system
   - no agency currently functioning as impartial but interested focal point for representing public opinion in Alberta on environmental issues
   - *not specifically provided for in current legislation*

5. Information producer

   - increasing public demand for such information
   - undertaken by several sectors already; would have to ensure it did not duplicate others' materials
   - requires improved distribution system
   - information could be targeted to different audiences
   - could set standards for environmental information (beyond seal of approval role)

Table 3 (cont'd)

ROLE

- currently lacks technical capability to perform this as a main role
- viewed by respondents as a secondary role
- *information production provided under current legislation for hearings, responses to Ministerial requests and Advisory Committee material only*

6. Policy analyst

- policy development: most policy development done within government departments, many of which have their own public advisory committees to assist them; other constraints that come into policy development would make it difficult for ECA to function appropriately
- *policy development not specifically provided for under current legislation, except in terms of policy review and response to Ministerial request*
- well positioned to provide an outside review process on policy-related matters, a role favoured by a majority of stakeholders

7. Holder of public consultation

- *hearings at Cabinet request and committees are only potential forms of consultation allowed under current legislation*

8. Environment awareness creator

- requires more resources to undertake effectively (higher public profile and improved distribution system)
- *not provided for under current legislation*

9. Public consultation advisor

- *not provided for under current legislation*

10. Information clearinghouse

- increasing public demand for such information
- requires more resources to undertake effectively (higher public profile and improved distribution system)
- critical that information is vetted prior to distribution; no organization performs this function
- workshops, conferences, national/international networking seen as part of this role
- viewed by respondents as a secondary role
- *not provided for under current legislation*

Table 3 (cont'd)

ROLE

11. Environmental advocate

- precludes policy development roles
- often insufficient information on which to take a firm position
- role already played by environmental groups
- jeopardizes credibility with government and industry
- *not specifically provided for under current legislation although environment conservation is not defined in the Act and could be interpreted as advocacy oriented*

12. Networker

- role filled by other organizations
- could be part of an overall information network
- *not specifically provided for under current legislation*

13. State of environment reporter

- requires independent, apolitical stance
- precludes policy development roles
- often insufficient information on which to take a firm position
- requires active government co-operation
- *not specifically provided for under current legislation*

14. Early warning system

- role not currently filled by any other group
- *not specifically provided for under current legislation*

15. Watchdog of government and industry

- requires independent, apolitical stance
- precludes policy development roles
- often insufficient information on which to take a firm position
- role already played by environmental groups
- watchdog of industry: duplicates government role
- as activist oriented cannot expect to have its recommendations accepted since it will be seen as an adversary
- does not require government confidence but role without its confidence will not be significant
- role with government is part of the responsibility of the Natural Resources Co-ordinating Council (duplicates ECA role)
- *role with industry not provided for under current legislation*

Table 3 (cont'd)

ROLE

16. Environment education centre

- *not specifically provided for under current legislation*

17. Policy co-ordinator

- largely purview of existing government departments and committees
- insufficient legislative authority to act as co-ordinator, *except to use its best efforts to co-ordinate through the medium of the Department of the Environment*
- part of responsibility of Natural Resources Co-ordinating Council

18. Seal of approval for environmental education materials

- *not specifically provided for under current legislation*

19. Issue resolver/mediator of disputes

- *not specifically provided for under current legislation*

20. Co-ordinator of environmental groups

- jeopardizes credibility with government and industry
- *duplicates role of Alberta Environment Network*
- *not specifically provided for under current legislation*

21. Environmental ombudsman

- requires independent, apolitical stance
- precludes policy development roles
- often insufficient information on which to take a firm position
- will have authority and stature to effect change but with exception of conducting independent investigations will not be able to play any other role
- does not require government confidence but role without its confidence will not be significant
- *not specifically provided for under current legislation*

22. Grassroots organizer

- jeopardizes credibility with government and industry
- *not specifically provided for under current legislation*

TABLE 4

AUDIENCE TO WHICH RESPONDENTS FELT THE ROLE SHOULD BE DIRECTED

(Only audiences which received support from half or more respondents are listed.)

	ROLE	PREFERRED AUDIENCE
1.	Advisor on environmental policy	Government
2.	Holder of hearings/secretariat	Government
3.	Responding to government requests	Government
4.	Barometer of public opinion	Government Industry Environmental Groups Public
5.	Information producer	Government Industry Environmental Groups Public
6.	Policy analyst	Government
7.	Holder of public consultation	Government Public
8.	Environment awareness creator	Public
9.	Public consultation advisor	Government Public
10.	Information clearinghouse	Environmental Groups Public
11.	Environmental advocate	Public
12.	Networker	Environmental Groups Public
13.	State of environment reporter	Public Government

Table 4 (cont'd)

ROLE		PREFERRED AUDIENCE
15.	Watchdog of government and industry	No agreement on audience
16.	Environment education centre	Public
17.	Policy co-ordinator	Government
18.	Seal of approval for environmental education materials	No audience agreement
19.	Issue resolved/mediator of disputes	No audience agreement
20	Co-ordinator of environmental groups	No audience agreement
21.	Environmental ombudsman	No audience agreement
22.	Grassroots organizer	No audience agreement

CHOICES IN THE REVITALIZATION

The consultant listed five choices which must be made for an effective revitalization.

1. Should the ECA work within the government system in a supportive, advisory role or should the ECA work from outside the system in an activist role?

   The ECA is funded by government and reports through the Minister of the Environment. Some suggest that the fact that it receives government funding would limit the credibility of an activist orientation.

   If the ECA chooses to work within the government system in a supportive, advisory role, it requires

   - the confidence and trust of the government,
   - the credibility of the general public,
   - the ability to provide a proactive service that helps decision-making and influences directions set,
   - the ability to provide information that is seen as objective, credible, and direction-setting oriented.

   Activist roles *(or those seen to be)* would be precluded. Such roles are grassroots organizer, co-ordinator of environmental groups, environmental advocate and watch-dog.

   If the ECA chooses to work outside the government system as an activist, then

   - its roles would include those involving criticism and challenge of the government, often in the public eye; these roles include grassroots organizer, co-ordinator of environmental groups, environmental advocate and watchdog;
   - confrontation with public officials would be inherent;
   - the ability to undertake roles such as consulting, reporting, research, education or policy analysis (which require independent, unbiased approach) would be limited; *however advocacy research, advocacy education, etc. would be consistent with the orientation.*

2. Who should the ECA's primary audience be - government, industry, labour, environmental groups, or general public?

   Government: If the ECA selects government as its primary audience, then other audiences become secondary.

   Industry: If the ECA selects industry, it may alienate itself from environmental groups and labour.

   Labour: If the ECA selects labour, it may alienate itself from environmental groups and industry.

   Environmental Groups: If the ECA selects environmental groups, it is likely to forfeit the support of government, industry and labour.

   General Public: If the ECA selects the general public, it is dealing with an audience with whom it is largely unknown. It would require the ability to make itself well known to the public or risk being regarded as just another environmental group.

3. Should the ECA deal primarily with the current decision-making agenda or with future-oriented matters (i.e., long-term, strategic issues)?

   If it chooses to deal with the current decision-making agenda, then the ECA needs to differentiate itself from other players involved. Note the number of other, ad hoc mechanisms available to address this time frame.

   The strategic niche is available. *However, if it chooses to be strategically oriented it will have to demonstrate its short-term relevance.*

4. The ECA requires a mission, with goals and a set of compatible roles.

   Whatever mission is selected the ECA requires a vision and goals so that it has a consistent direction and image.

5. The ECA requires an organizational model compatible with 4 above, including an organizational structure, management systems and the allocation of human (staff and volunteer) and fiscal resources. Whatever route is selected the current organizational model requires strengthening.

Requirements for a Revitalized ECA

Regardless of the choices made, the consultant listed three essential requirements:

- The ECA needs political commitment; it requires the active co-operation of government.
- The ECA must generate results that are credible to all interests.
- The ECA's resources need to be commensurate with its roles.